

Week 3.

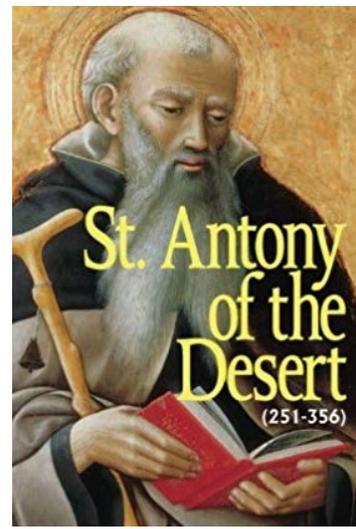
- Have you ever visited a Monastery, read about or watched a TV programme about Monastic life?
- Read Acts 4:31-35
- Why might the principle of sharing resources be important for Luke to record in Acts?
- Where can you see this happening today?
- How might we put this principle into practise?
- What things might have to change if we as a church were to really take this principle seriously?
- What is the definition of a Monk? *

The loose-knit desert communities evolved into a group of Monks (previously hermits) living together in one dwelling, sharing a variety of common tasks but living individually disciplined lives.

- Read the notes opposite about Pachomius.
- How might the 'new' Rule have been beneficial to the Monks? What might they have lost?

The character of Monasticism has changed since the 3rd century although the main elements have largely been retained. Towards the end of the 20th century there was a resurgence of interest in Monasticism - particularly among lay people and a number of 'Monasteries Without Walls' have developed. Eg. Monastery of the heart led by Benedictine Sr. Joan Chittister

- Why do you think the concept of Monasticism has lasted so long?



Early Monasticism.

The word 'Monk' comes from the Greek 'monos' ~ meaning 'alone'

Pachomius was born c. 292 in Upper Egypt to Pagan parents. He was well educated & became a Roman Soldier. His life was transformed following contact with some simple Egyptian Christians, whose lifestyle had caught his attention. He gave his life to Christ and subsequently withdrew to a desert community to grow in spiritual maturity. In c. 325 Pachomius established the first Monastery in which Monks lived under one roof according to a common Rule which he wrote. It emphasised poverty, fasting, common prayer, collaborative work, silence, moderation, discretionary eating & the institution of a general chapter (governing body). So popular did this prove, that many more Monastic Communities were established - including several for women. They became so well established that they survived well into the 11th century. Pachomius' Rule formed the basis for Benedict's later widely adopted Rule during the 6th century.

Primary sources for this Series :

The Desert Fathers ; Saint Anthony & the Beginnings of Monasticism : Peter H Gorg : Ignatius Press : 2011

Recommended Read :

The Monastery of The Heart : Sr Joan Chittister : SPCK : 2011

monasteriesoftheheart.org

- Close in prayer, praying for each other's needs.

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